

I am critical of the Cape Wind project to build an industrial-scale wind power plant in federal waters of Nantucket Sound. I think it is a bad idea from numerous points of view: Before enumerating them I would like to identify myself: I am a native of Martha's Vineyard and now live in Falmouth. I am a lifelong environmentalist; long before it became fashionable we were taught at home to separate our trash and recycle, and conserve heat and water, shut doors and wear sweaters and walk or bike to school, and these habits have never left me. I ride my bike around town; last year I put all of six tanks of gas in my car and I hope to reduce that this year. I use compact fluorescent bulbs and hope to get solar panels on my house within the next year. Some people accuse all those who are critical of the Cape Wind project (and other industrial-scale projects) of not caring about the environment. I totally reject such logic. I speak as an environmentalist and native Cape Codder who is critical of the Cape Wind project.

Here's why:

1. **WRONG SCALE.** The concentrated-in-one-place "industrial-scale" model for a power plant is appropriate to the generation of electricity from high-intensity fuels such as oil, coal, and nuclear. To generate power from renewables, which are diffuse, low-intensity power sources available pretty much everywhere in some degree, the industrial-scale model of concentrated generation is intrinsically illogical. One hundred thirty turbines would be stationary for large portions of many days and weeks and months. Meanwhile, wind would be blowing in other areas where no turbines have been placed. As far as I know, so far no serious study has been done of the potential to match or exceed the projected energy output of Cape Wind by scattering turbines among various municipalities who have wind resources (that means most of the towns on the Cape).

2. **WRONG PHYSICS.** The farther the point of use is from the point of generation, the more current gets lost in transmission. This is another obvious argument for placing solar panels, wind turbines, etc. as close as possible to the point of end use--not to concentrate in one place a power plant that would distribute energy both near and far. Furthermore, it is my understanding that all of the energy would go off the Cape, and then some of it might come back to us here. How stupid is that?

2. **WRONG PLACE.** Nantucket Sound has too many other values and uses that would be negatively impacted by the emplacement of 130 gigantic wind turbines. Providing beauty and a healthy, inspiring escape for thousands of city dwellers who live close by is just one such value. The structures would, obviously, be hazards to navigation: ferries, fishing boats, pleasure boats, mercantile vessels. The oil in the turbine structures would be a danger for leaking and spills. No one is sure what the effect would be on wildlife. The towers may well be impediments to radar and other communication technologies.

3. **WRONG BUSINESS PLAN.** Cape Wind stands to reap millions of dollars in subsidies from the state and the federal governments. This is presumably "profit" for Cape Wind's shareholders and investors, regardless of whether their project actually makes any money. Thus, public monies are transformed into private profits. Who ARE these investors? I should like to see their names. Can I invest in Cape Wind? I doubt it. If genuine profits can

be made from generating and selling renewable energy, or if no profits can be made but investors can make their own “profits” merely by holding an interest in this project, then why not let municipalities or a regional authority develop the local resources and let them either make genuine profits from generating and selling energy, or at least bring the subsidies to their own communities or region. I am totally against letting Cape Wind, a private developer, desecrate Nantucket Sound, exploit the area’s wind resources, and scoop up millions and millions in subsidies for its investors. I feel sure that many of the Cape’s residents would be willing to give the idea of wind turbines in Nantucket a hearing if there were local control: if local government or, say, the Cape Light Compact were in charge of the project. Municipalities should be encouraged to form publicly owned utilities and develop their own local renewable resources: solar at the house level; wind at the municipal level; ocean energy (wave, current, tidal etc.) at the regional level.

4. NO CONSERVATION INCENTIVES. Cape Wind’s plan has no incentives built in to conserve energy and I know that Jim Gordon has no interest in exploring a conservation component to his project. This actually makes Cape Wind less a part of the solution than a part of the problem: clearly, we must not only reduce our use of fossil fuels; we must reduce our total energy use. Renewables will not be able to meet all our needs for a long, long time to come, but a large array of turbines will surely lull many into thinking they can continue to let the good ol’ wasteful energy times roll. It has been established that conserved energy is the best “new energy” source, better even than renewables. Failing to impress the importance of conservation on users-- individuals, businesses, government-- is the wrong route. (As a matter of fact, I have read that the DOD is very interested in the potential of renewables and is keeping a sharp eye on the Cape Wind project, with a view to impounding the energy produced in case of emergency. It’s not too hard to imagine the full-scale militarization of Nantucket Sound.)

Approval of any and all new power plants, regardless of their size and energy source, must be contingent on the incorporation of conservation goals and incentives built into the plans. Naturally, local authorities and municipalities will be much more effective at crafting such programs and meeting conservation goals than a faceless private developer whose primary responsibility, by law, is to maximize shareholders’ profits, not maximize the public and environmental good by getting users to consume less energy!

Thus, there are numerous reasons to be cautious about giving the green light to Cape Wind and other similar projects. When it comes to renewables, I feel that the watchwords must be: Decentralize. Encourage local control. Mandate conservation.

I thank the Minerals Management Service for this opportunity to express my views.

Yours sincerely,
Katherine Scott
Falmouth, Mass.